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## UNH Business School Tour Will Focus on Economic Impact of Air Quality in New England

By [Janet Lathrop](#)  
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UNH News Bureau

June 19, 2002

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DURHAM, N.H. -- New Hampshire business and industry leaders, with representatives of regulatory and environmental groups, will attend the first in a series of tours Friday, June 28, in Durham to familiarize them with the possible uses of air quality monitoring and forecast information produced at the University of New Hampshire.

Ross Gittell, the James R. Carter professor and chair of the management department at UNH's Whittemore School of Business and Economics, organized the tour for New Hampshire businesses and environmental groups interested in exploring the capabilities of AIRMAP -- the Atmospheric Investigation, Regional Monitoring, Analysis and Prediction project.

AIRMAP is the \$5.3 million project operated by UNH and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) that allows scientists to monitor New England's regional air quality and gain a more detailed understanding of various air pollution sources than ever before. The system, which came to UNH through Sen. Judd Gregg's efforts, can monitor regional air quality, weather and climate variables together rather than one at a time, which allows analysis of real-world interactions.

As Gittell explains next week's tour, "We want to facilitate communication, learning and collaboration between AIRMAP scientists, business leaders and others who might benefit from new uses of air quality information." For example, businesses might identify applications for AIRMAP to benefit corporations and, at the same time, help to reduce environmental damage.

Despite the popular stereotype, he adds, "industry profitability and environmental protection do not have to be at odds. Business can operate profitably while working to preserve our environment."

Doug Patch, a former chair of the N.H. Public Utility Commission and an attorney active in energy issues at Orr & Reno, Concord, says of the tour, "I hope to gain a better understanding of whether improved air quality and weather information could help enhance delivery of electricity to customers, both commercial-industrial and residential, in a more economically and environmentally efficient way."

"We generate electricity a number of ways -- with natural gas, coal, oil, nuclear, wind, hydro, woodburning and waste-burning -- and demand varies depending on the season, day of the week and time of day. It's quite possible that with better information about air quality and weather, and understanding the impact that different generation methods have on air quality, we could reduce the impact on air quality. It's certainly worth looking into. What we do to encourage creative thinking and partnerships could benefit us all."

Sarah Thorne, research director at the Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests, remarked, "This kind of cooperation is terrific and we appreciate being invited."

Besides Gittell, UNH's interdisciplinary team includes Whittemore School faculty Richard England, professor of economics; Robert Woodward, professor of health administration and the Forrest D. McKerley Chair in Health Economics; Richard Mills, professor of economics; and John Halstead, professor of resource economics at UNH's College of Life Sciences and Agriculture.

Tour guests are expected to include Dennis Delay, senior economist at Public Service of N.H., other utilities, Liberty Mutual Insurance, and the Conservation Law Foundation.

The UNH AIRMAP business-science partnership will span three years, says Gittell. "We're not just looking at the current situation but also at how economic value could change in the future." A later visit is planned to

the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Region 1 headquarters in Boston.

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